

Crisis Communication Plan

Communities Connected for Kids

Introduction

A crisis for purposes of this plan refers to any event or emergency that brings unexpected public attention to Communities Connected for Kids, or, because of association, to any of its providers or community partners. In a crisis, questions can come from the media almost immediately. It is critical that we respond in a positive, prepared manner free of hesitancy or avoidance. The goal is to provide information that helps to maintain trust in our organization, system of care and leadership. What is at stake is our reputation as a caring, healing institution.

Definitions

Incident

The event that creates a potential crisis or emergency.

Crisis

A situation that potentially puts the organization's reputation at risk.

Emergency

A situation that requires immediate attention. An emergency can be a crisis.

Crisis Management

A set of factors designed to combat crises and to lessen the actual damages inflicted. Crisis management should not merely be reactionary; it should also consist of preventative measures and preparation in anticipation of potential crises. Effective crisis management has the potential to greatly reduce the amount of damage the organization receives as a result of the crisis, and may even prevent an incident from ever developing into a crisis.

1. *Pre-crisis*: preparing ahead of time for crisis management in an effort to prevent a future crisis from occurring.
2. *Crisis*: the response to an actual crisis event.
3. *Post-crisis*: occurs after the crisis has been resolved; the efforts by the crisis management team to understand why the crisis occurred and to learn from the event.

Possible Scenarios

Client is endangered, hurt or killed

A child drowns in his family pool while under protective supervision

Client endangers others

A young adult in Extended Foster Care exposes himself to a young child

Personnel misconduct

A case manager falsifies documents, lies about visiting a child, and the child dies from week-old existing injuries two days later

Provider misconduct

Employees from a contracted provider accidentally leave a young child behind on a field trip to the local park

Criminal or legal action

A local judge holds the organization's CEO in contempt of court

Corporate crisis

Escalating issues with the local dependency court lead to a review and possible cancelation of the organization's state contract

Perceived crisis

This is anything that seems to be a crisis even if it is not; anticipation of something bad happening which may not be based in fact

Positive crisis

Donations exceed what is needed or can be handled

The Crisis Management Team

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Director of Community Relations

The CEO, COO and Director of Community Relations compose the core crisis communication team. However, other possible team members include County Directors and the President of the Board of Directors. An up-to-date list of contact information for team members will be kept on file with this document in the Communities Connected for Kids folder of the Administrative Share Drive. In addition, when a team member is traveling, contact information and itinerary should be left with the most senior member of the team.

Responsibilities of Crisis Communication Team

The Director of Community Relations will act as the lead in all crisis communication activity; the director will create press releases, develop a situation analysis and key message points, notify relevant third parties and distribute all approved communication information to leadership, the Board of Directors and the communications point person for the state Department of Children and Families.

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for approving all communication material, though all members of the Crisis Management Team will be given the opportunity to make changes to final communication documents.

Crisis Communication Response Procedure

The following steps will be followed in the event of an incident:

1. The Director of Community Relations will create a written analysis of the situation and develop a set of message points. The situation analysis will be for internal communication purposes only, while the message points will be available for use with the public.
2. The Director of Community Relations will submit all communication documents for approval to the team, then distribute the information to Senior Management and, when appropriate, to the Board of Directors and relevant third parties.
3. The Director of Community Relations will send an email reminder to Senior Management that all media inquiries should be directed to the Office of Community Relations; the Director of Communications will then coordinate other speakers for comment, when appropriate.
4. The Director of Community Relations will notify any third parties, including leadership of relevant providers and the local communication representative for the state Department of Children and Families, request leadership of all local media coordination and share all communication documents.
5. When appropriate, the Director of Community Relations will develop and submit a press release to define and control the crisis.
6. The Director of Community Relations will report all media inquiries and response to the team and follow up with a report of all activity completed regarding the crisis
7. When appropriate, the team will meet to discuss necessary changes to the procedure.